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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE
P.S. Resolution No. 158

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by: Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE END VIEW OF PROTECTING OUR NATIONAL INTEREST

WHEREAS, the Philippine Constitution provides in Article 2, Section 7, that, "The State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states, the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination;"

WHEREAS, having a clear strategic foreign policy is integral to our development as a nation. Our relations with members of the international community have bearing on our ability to protect our territory and environment, develop our economy, and promote the welfare and well-being of our citizens;

WHEREAS, the Philippines' recent historic win in its case against China before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in the Hague with regards to maritime entitlements offers a model for the global community of a fair and peaceful way of settling international disputes, in adherence to international law;

WHEREAS, with the PCA's favorable ruling, the Philippines had the opportunity and initial momentum to rally its neighbors to unite against China's increasing territorial assertiveness in the region. President Duterte sought instead a "soft landing" and sent former President Ramos as a special envoy to initiate talks and revive relations with Beijing;

WHEREAS, speaking to the Chinese ambassador on August 29, the President reportedly said that he is willing to temporarily set aside the PCA ruling so as not to endanger the ongoing talks, but that he means to raise it at a later time. China, on the other hand, has repeatedly asserted that it will not honor the decision of the arbitral tribunal, and would only be open to addressing the dispute through bilateral talks;¹

WHEREAS, it was reported that during the recent East Asia Summit, the President did not read from his prepared speech, which would have highlighted

¹ <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/08/29/1618421/duterte-wants-set-aside-arbitral-ruling-now>

the need to respect international law, including the UNCLOS, and the PCA ruling favoring the Philippines. The President instead raised the issue of killings in the Philippines under the period of US occupation, seemingly to challenge present calls for the Philippine government to uphold human rights in its war on drugs;²

WHEREAS, in a ceremony in Malacañang last September 12, President Duterte reportedly said that he purposefully did not attend the recent ASEAN-US Summit "as a matter of principle."³ On the other hand, Foreign Affairs Secretary Yasay later insisted that President Duterte skipped the said meeting because the President was not feeling well due to a case of migraine;⁴

WHEREAS, two years ago, the Philippines signed a defense agreement with the US, which allowed the US military to deployed troops to the Philippines for the purpose of training exercises with Philippine forces. The Philippine Supreme Court upheld the validity of the agreement last January 2016;⁵

WHEREAS, President Duterte reportedly said in a speech before newly appointed civil servants last September 12, that US troops must leave Mindanao because the presence of US special forces in the area could aggravate security risks. Presidential Spokesman Abella reportedly said, however, that President Duterte's statement was not official policy and that no order has been served based on this pronouncement.⁶ DOF Secretary Yasay then later stated that the withdrawal of US troops would only be temporary to ensure their safety, according to news reports;⁷

WHEREAS, last April, the Philippines and the US agreed to undertake joint patrolling expeditions in disputed waters in the West Philippine Sea in light of increasing assertive territorial claims by China.⁸ However, in a speech before the Philippine Air Force last September 13, the President reportedly said that the Philippines would no longer engage in joint maritime patrols with the US in order to avoid hostilities.⁹ DOF Secretary Yasay later reportedly clarified that joint patrols within 12 nautical miles of the Philippine Coast would still be continued;¹⁰

² <http://www.rappler.com/nation/145779-duterte-asean-speech-west-philippine-sea-ruling>

³ <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/814802/duterte-purposely-skipped-us-asean-summit>

⁴ <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/581202/news/nation/dfa-chief-contradicts-duterte-s-statement-on-skipping-asean-us-meet>

⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/13/world/asia/philippines-south-china-sea-ash-carter.html>

⁶ <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/09/13/1623374/palace-clarifies-dutertes-statement-telling-us-troops-leave-not-yet>

⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-philippines-idUSKCN11L2EE>

⁸ <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/562715/news/nation/joint-phl-us-patrols-in-south-china-sea-started-in-march-us-defense-chief>

⁹ <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/144805/duterte-rejects-joint-patrols#ixzz4KCBzda17>

¹⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-philippines-idUSKCN11L2EE>

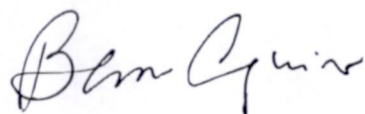
WHEREAS, President Duterte reportedly mentioned in the same speech last September 13, that the Philippines plans to procure defense equipment from Russia and China.¹¹ Traditionally, since the 1950s, the Philippines has sourced a majority of its weapons from the United States, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute;¹²

WHEREAS, Presidential Spokesperson Abella reportedly assured that despite the President's recent pronouncements, the government would continue to honor its present agreements with the United States. At the same time, he said that the Philippines is "just charting an independent course."¹³ According to reports, DFA Secretary Yasay has also asserted that some of the President's recent remarks have been misunderstood and that the Philippines is firmly committed to its alliance with the US;¹⁴

WHEREAS, given the number of conflicting statements coming from the President and senior government officials, there is a need to clarify government's position and engagement with its neighbors and allies, and to ensure the Filipino public that we are pursuing a clear and coherent foreign policy that is most beneficial to the country;

RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, by the Philippine Senate to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the foreign policy direction of the government with the end view of protecting our national interest.

Adopted,



¹¹ <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/13/16/duterte-deals-with-china-russia-in-the-pipeline>

¹² <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-13/duterte-courts-china-for-weapons-ends-joint-patrols-with-u-s>

¹³ <https://www.rt.com/news/359255-philippines-us-independent-policies/>

¹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-philippines-idUSKCN11L2EE>